The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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"A Merry Christmas."

If you want a merry Christmas,
My little girls and boys,
I can tell you how to double
Your pleasures and your joys.
Go share your many blessings
With the suffering and the sad,
Where weary hearts are waiting
For you to make them glad.

There are homes in every city
Where Santa doesn't go,
For there no pretty stockings
Are tempting him, you know;
Where tender children hunger,
And want is at the door;
Suppose *you* had a little less,
And *they* a little more!

There was once a holy baby
Who in a manger lay;
He brought to you, my darlings,
This blessed Christmas day.
O keep his loving message
Within your memory:
"As ye do it to the least of these,
Ye have done it unto Me."—*Sel.*

Let the bells ring out the joy of the nations,
Jesus, the babe of the manger, is King;
He is the highest who once was the lowest,
Let all the children be joyful and sing,
"Peace and good will, strife shall be still,
The babe of the manger is King."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
"God is not dead! nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

"A brave man must be ever faithful,
Cowards alone dare venture to be false."

Rob's Conscience.

Robert, when you go to school this morning, you may take some money and pay Mr. Black's bill," said Mrs. Golding.

"All right, mother;" and the boy took the five-dollar note, and folded it away in his pocket-book.

Mr. Black was the town shoemaker. His bill against the Goldings that month was but a small one, amounting to a dollar; so the five would pay it, and leave four dollars as change.

How Rob felt as he crumpled the four bills into his pocket-book with the receipt! With all the airs of a capitalist, he left the store, and marched on to school.

During the first hour he had no opportunity to look at the money. At the end of that time, the teacher was busy with the geography class, and he drew out his bills, one at a time, spreading them on his knee, and showed them to his admiring seat mate. Wetting his fingers, he ran through them as he had seen bank clerks do. What a delightful rustle they made! What a privilege it was to be wealthy!

In the midst of his enjoyment Rob suddenly stopped, turned very red, then very white, and stared at the money. On the top of the pile lay the identical five-dollar note that he had paid Mr. Black! It couldn't be! He rubbed his eyes and looked again. Yes, there it lay. Mr. Black had made a mistake, and handed it back with the change. When he reached this conclusion, Rob became cool, and put the money away, intending, as a matter of course, to carry it back that noon.

"Say, what was the matter when you were counting the money?" inquired Jim, his seat mate, at recess.

Rob explained.

"Just like old Black; he makes lots of blunders. He gave Justin Edwards a dollar too much last week. Justin said he thought it was just as sinful to refuse money as it was to refuse a drink, so he kep' it."

His listener reflected on the course of the namesake of the famous theologian, but said nothing.

"Black never knows when he makes a mistake. He would have failed up long ago, only he charges such high prices for his goods; folks kinder feel that they have a right to keep what he gives them by mistake. They never return it."

"They ought to," replied Rob, with a tremble in his voice.

"Oh, I don't know. You see, they look at it this way. If they pay a dollar too much for a pair of shoes, he never gives it back; so if he pays a dollar too much in change, they don't pay that back."

Yielding to Jim's entreaties, and his own secret desire, Rob did not go home to dinner by the usual route; instead, he went across lots.

"We won't have any other time to see that wren's nest," said Jim, and this artful suggestion settled the question.

At night, with the crowd of boys, he went down to the post-office. All the school children went there once a day, whether they expected a letter or not. Most of them went because the others did.

The five-dollar bill still remained in Rob's pocket. He had given his mother the four "ones" and the receipt, but had said nothing about the other. What he intended to do he could not determine. What was right he well knew. The matter could not be put off much longer. Jim saw the battle that was raging in his companion's mind, and drew him out behind the great brick building in which was the post-office.

"Say," he said intensely, "You ain't going to be fool enough to carry that back to old Black? If you do, like as not he will make another blunder, and give it to Tim Connor. Ain't your folks overpaid him more than that amount in the last three years?"

Tim Connor was Rob's particular enemy, and the thought of his getting the money, although remote, was not without its effect.

"Say, let me take it in to Perkins and get it changed. It'll be just as much: five ones are just as good as one five. It will fill out that pocket-book ever so much better."

Rob complied. The bill was changed, and before he went home that night, partly spent.

Three days later the money was all gone.

"If I'd stole that money I would have had more than half of it now," remarked Jim, putting the last peppermint out of sight.

Very meekly Rob accepted the rebuke, and went away alone to think. Now that the excitement was over, and the candy all gone, he felt mean enough. Jim no longer hung around and flattered. Instead, he grinned provokingly when money was mentioned. So sensitive did Rob become that he started whenever his name was called. Oftentimes "Robert" sounded in his guilty ears like "robber." If the money was only in his pocket now, how gladly he would return it! When he tried to pray, before going to bed, he saw five-dollar bills by the hundred, although his eyes were fast shut. At length, after a week of misery, he determined to spend all his leisure minutes in earning money enough to pay Mr. Black.

Five dollars! What a sum it seemed to earn! Little by little he gathered together his pennies, and nickles, and dimes. It seemed an age before he had a dollar. The thought that five times that amount was required was most discouraging.

"Say, got any money?" asked Jim.

"None to spare."

"Lend me a quarter till to-morrow? I'll pay you, sure."

Rob pondered. He disliked to be thought mean, yet he feared Jim's "to-morrow" would never come. He recalled similar loans which his friend always forgot to make good. A queer sense of pride kept him from mentioning these petty debts, although each new request brought them vividly before his mind.

"The money that I have is not mine to lend," he said at length.

"Where did you get it?"

"It belongs to somebody else. I can't touch it."

"You ain't always so careful," was the rejoinder.

"I'm going to pay back every cent I took from Mr. Black," replied Rob, flushing.

So he toiled on: running errands, doing chores, weeding, sawing wood, doing anything that would bring in a cent. Very, very slowly his

little hoard grew. Finally he had enough. Tremblingly he went into the store, and waited until Mr. Black was at leisure.

"Well, sonny, what is it?"

"You gave me too much money for change, and I want to return it," said Rob, with a shake in his voice.

"Did I? Just like me," said Mr. Black, throwing the bill into a drawer and turning to a customer.

"Much good it did you," said Jim with a sneer; "he didn't even say thank 'you.' I guess next time you won't break your neck to pay him."

"There isn't going to be a 'next time,'" replied Rob. "I paid that back because I hate to be a thief. Now I can look people square in the face. I wouldn't sell the clear conscience that I gave now for five hundred dollars."

"Humph!" said Jim, "I would."

"A fellow can't sell what he hasn't got," remarked Rob.—*Sel.*

The Thief Who Cut His Stick.

A man having lost a bag of dinars in his own house complained to the cadi. The cadi summoned all the people of the house, and gave each of them a piece of chalk. All the sticks were of the same length; and he said whoever was the thief his stick would be longer than those of the rest by a finger's breadth. When he had sent them away, the person who had committed the robbery, being seized with fear, cut off a finger's breadth from his stick. Next day the cadi called them together and examined the sticks, and presently knew the thief, from whom he recovered the bag of money, and then punished him. So sin often betrays itself.

A Good Reason.

"Little boy," said a gentleman, "why do you carry that umbrella over your head? It's not raining."

"No."

"And the sun is not shining."

"No."

"Then why do you carry it?"

"'Cause when it rains pa wants it, an' it's only this kinder weather that I kin git ter use it at all."

A CLOSE-FISTED Scotchman recently insisted upon being admitted to a panorama at half-price because he had but one eye.

A Fair Start.

It is very important that persons entering on any course take a fair start; many have failed in this end because they have neglected this, and miscalculated their strength, their abilities, and their acquirements. The *Baptist Record* tells of a young man who wanted to go to school. He called on President Webb, of Mississippi College and stated his desire.

"Well," said the President, "what do you know?"

"Nothing, sir," was the response.

"Well, you are just four years ahead of some of the students. It takes them four years to learn what you have to start with. Your prospects are fine, sir."

One of the greatest obstacles to the acquirement of knowledge is to be ignorant of one's own ignorance. No man will learn much until he is emptied of self-conceit; so long as he thinks he knows everything, he will not learn anything; and sometimes it is more difficult to empty a man of his ignorance than it would be to fill him up with knowledge.

The Apostle Paul says, "Let no man deceive himself; if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, *let him become a fool*, that he may be wise." The man who is willing to become a fool at the beginning, may avoid the danger of being a fool at the end, and may have a prospect of learning true wisdom by and by. But the man who claims to be wise at first, is very sure to prove himself foolish at last, and may never learn that true wisdom, which cometh from God only.—*Sel.*

In no place in the world has the individual character more weight than at a public school.

Remember this, I beseech you.

Now is the time in all your lives probably when you may have more wide influence for good or evil on the society you live in than you ever can again. Acquit yourselves like men, then; speak up, and strike out if necessary, for whatever is true, and manly, and lovely, and of good report; never try to be popular, but only to do your duty and help others to do theirs, and you may leave the tone of feeling in the school higher than you found it!

WE are credibly informed that there are 10,000 children in New York City who have no place to sleep nights, except in sheds and barrels.

He Careth for You.

He giveth snow:
The Lord of Light,
Who ever doeth
All things right.

And who, by His
All loving arm,
Preserveth well
His own from harm.

His children in
Their sheltered homes,
Are gathered, when
The wild storm comes.

And snow like wool
Makes warm the nest
Wherein His loving
Creatures rest.

E. M. B.

In the good old days a gentleman in the East one day missed his dog. He sent for his sedan-bearers and told them to go in quest of him. They said: "We are not here to seek for your dog, but simply to bear your sedan." "You are perfectly right," said the gentleman; "so I shall go in search of the dog. Bring up the sedan at once." The gentleman got into his sedan, and the men had to take him over hill and dale till they were quite tired. They then said with one voice: "Sir, we beg of you to stop, we can hardly stand on our legs any more. If you wish to seek for the dog farther we shall go in quest of it." "Do so," said the gentleman smiling, and walked home. "Alas," said the men as they sat down under a fig-tree to rest their weary limbs, "often mending is but marring."—*Indian Fables, in Leisure Hours.*

A wise man in the East had two pupils, to each of whom he gave, one night, a sum of money, and said, "What I have given you is very little; yet with it you must buy at once something that would fill this dark room."

One of them purchased a great quantity of hay, and cramming it into the room, said, "Sir, I have filled the room."

"Yes," said the wise man, "and with greater gloom."

Then the other, with scarcely a third of the money, bought a candle, and lighting it, said, "Sir, I have filled the hall."

"Yes," said the wise man, "and with light. Such are the ways of wisdom, for it seeks good means to good ends."

This teacher certainly had a droll way of instructing his pupils, but it was a very good way. They learned that it is one thing to fill, and another thing to fill properly. One of them knew this before; the other seemed not to know it. He was a simpleton. There are many such in the world.

Sincerity doesn't save. One may be sincerely wrong.

For the Myrtle.

Love is Above All.

When the heart is overflowing
Then affection has its way,
It has been so since the morning
And the evening made a day.

For of all the powers which heaven
Has vouchsafed to great and small,
This, the simple power of loving
Is the greatest of them all.

And forever and forever
While the stars shall set and rise,
While the watchers from the heavens
Bend above us tender eyes.

Those shall be accounted God-like
In the record writ above,
Who have most of love within them
For our God himself is *Love*. E. M. B.

Boys, you are spirited, brave, and full of courage; be merciful also, and merciful to animals; be merciful to all living creatures, and remember that wherever God has given life you have no right wantonly to destroy it.

A Railway Lesson.

It was a hot dusty day, when two or three passengers entered the train on the Iowa Division of the Chicago and North-Western Road at Bridgewater. Among them was a stylishly dressed young man, who wore a stiff white hat, patent-leather shoes, the neatest of cuffs, the shiniest of stand-up collars. He carried a cane and carefully brushed the dust from the seat in front of me before he sat down.

Just across the aisle, opposite him sat a tired woman holding a sick baby. I never saw on any face a more discouraged, worn-out despairing look than that on the mother's face. The baby was too sick even to cry. It lay moaning and gasping in the mother's lap while the dust and cinders flew in at the open door and windows. The heat and dust made travelling even for strong men almost unbearable.

I had put down the stylish young man in front of me as a specimen of the dude family, and was making a mental calculation on the probable existence of brains under the new hat, when, to my astonishment, he leaned over the aisle and said to the woman:

"Madam, can I be of any assistance to you? Just let me hold your baby a while. You look very tired."

The woman seemed much surprised; the request was made in the politest and most delicate manner.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said she, tremulously. "I am tired." And her lips quivered.

"I think the baby will come to me," said the young man, with a smile. "Poor thing! it's too sick to make any objection. I will hold it carefully, madam, while you lie down and rest a while. Have you come far?"

"From the Black Hills."

"What! By stage?"

"Yes; but the baby was well when I started. I was on my way home to the East. My husband —my husband—"

"Ah, yes, I see, I see!" continued the young man, in a sympathetic tone, as he glanced at the bit of crape on the little travelling hat. By this time he had taken the baby, and was holding it in his arms.

"Now you can lie down and rest a little. Have you far to go?"

"To Connecticut," repiled the woman, almost with a sob, as she wearily arranged a shawl over a valise, and prepared to lie down in the seat.

"Ah, yes, I see! And you haven't money enough to go in a sleeping-car, have you, madam?"

The poor woman blushed faintly, and put one hand over her face, while the tears dropped between her worn fingers.

I looked out of the window, and a mist came over my eyes, while I changed my calculation of the young man's mental ability. He looked thoughtfully and tenderly down at the baby, and in a short time the mother was fast asleep.

A woman sitting across the aisle from me, who had heard as much of the conversation as I had, came and offered to relieve the young man of his charge. "I am ashamed of myself for not offering to take the baby from the mother before. Poor little thing! It's asleep."

"So it is. I'll surrender it to you now," (with a cheerful smile.)

At this point the train stopped at a station, and the young man rose in his seat, took off his hat, and said, in a clear, earnest voice:

"Ladies and gentlemen, here is an opportunity for each one of us to show that we have been brought up in a Christian land, and have had Christian fathers and mothers. This poor woman" (pointing at the sleeping mother) "has come all the way from the Black Hills, and is on her way to Connecticut. Her husband is dead her baby is ill. She hasn't money enough to travel in a sleeping-car, and is all tired ont and discouraged. What will you do about it?"

"Do!" cried a big man down near the water-cooler, rising excitedly. "Do! Take up a collection" [the American citizen's last resort in distress]. "I'll give $5."

The effect was electrical. The hat went around, and the way the silver dollars and the quarters and the ten-cent pieces rattled in it would have done any true heart good.

I wish I could describe the look on the woman's face when she awoke and the money was given to her. She tried to thank us all, and failed; she broke down completely. But we didn't need any thanks.

There was a sleeping-car on the train, and the young man saw the mother and child transferred to it at once. I did not hear what she said to him when he left her, but it must have been a hearty "God bless you!"

More than one of us in that car took that lesson to himself, and I learned that even stylish as well as poor clothes may cover a noble heart

SELECTION FOR A CHRISTMAS CONCERT.

News from Bethlehem.

BOY.—What news is this from Bethlehem's plain?
GIRL.—The blessed Savior came to reign.

B. Who heard the tidings with delight?
G. Shepherds who watched their flocks by night.

B. How can we say that this was so?
G. From the Bible this we know.

B. Who'll tell us all about the sight,
Which shepherds welcomed with delight?

G. We'll tell you all about the sight,
Which shepherds welcomed with delight.

G. Forms are seen amid the air,
Clad in white—behold how fair!

B. Angel voices too we hear,
Crying loudly: "Never fear."

G. Hear them shouting from afar?
"Honor to the morning star."

B. Hear the blessed words they say:
"To you a Savior's born to-day."

G. Hear them sing their song of love:
"Glory be to God above."

B. The shining hosts proclaim God's love,
And then return to heaven above.

G. The shepherds hasten o'er the plain,
To welcome Him who comes to reign.

B. And while they gaze upon the sight,
Are filled with wonder and delight.

G. Behold the well-beloved Son,
And our redemption, now begun.

B. & G. Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below.

Christmas.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King;"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Our Christmas Tree. A Carol.

They tell a lovely story,
In lands beyond the sea,
How, when the King of Glory
Lay on His mother's knee,
Before the prophet-princes
Came, bringing gifts in hand,
The dumb beasts *felt* the miracle,
Men could not *vnderstand*!
The gentle, patient donkey,
And the ox that trod the corn,
Knelt down beside the manger,
And knew that Christ was born;
And so they say, in Sweden,
At twelve, each Christmas night,
The dumb beasts kneel to worship
And see the Christmas light!
This fancy makes men kinder
To the creatures needing care,
They give them Christmas greeting,
And dainty Christmas fare,
The cat and dog sup gaily,
And a sheaf of golden corn
Is raised above the roof-tree,
For the birds on Christmas morn!
We do not live in Sweden
But we can feed the birds,
And make dumb creatures happy,
By kindly deeds and words.
No animal so humble,
No living thing so small,
But that the God who made us,
Has made and loves them all!
If we to them are cruel,
Like Christ we *cannot* be!
And this shall be my lesson,
From our dear Christmas Tree.

A Christmas Carol.

Ring out the bells for Christmas,
The happy, happy day!
In winter wild the holy Child
Within the cradle lay.
Oh, wonderful! the Savior
Is in the manger lone;
His palace is a stable,
And Mary's arms his throne:
Ring out the bells for Christmas,
The happy, happy day!

On Bethlehem's quiet hillside,
In ages long gone by,
In angel-notes the glory floats,
Glory to God on high!
Yet wakes the sun as joyous
As when the Lord was born;
And still he comes to greet you,
On every Christmas morn:
Ring out the bells for Christmas,
The happy, happy day!

Every moment of time is a monument of mercy.

HARVEST PAGE.

Hidden Seed

193.—ENIGMA.

I am composed of 30 letters.
My 17, 3, 4, 5 comes in Winter.
My 7, 8, 9 is worn on the head.
My 11, 12, 13, 17, 21 is what we live in.
My 14, 15, 16, 23 is used in walking.
My 27, 28, 29, 30, 21 is on a door.
My 19, 20, 22, 23 is a bird.
My 24, 25, 23 is a grain.
My 2, 1, 3 is kindred.
My 6, 10, 18, 26 is taken with the evening meal.
My whole is what Job answered the Lord. *Beth.*

194.—DROP LETTER PUZZLE.

G—d—l—s—u—n—w. *Clara Churchill.*

195.—ENIGMA.

I am composed of 9 lettsrs.
My 3, 8, 6 is an animal.
My 1, 2, 7, 9 is not bad.
My 4, 5 is a verb.
My whole is true. *Nellie Tompkins.*

196.—DIAMOND PUZZLF.

A vowel : Part of the head : To take without permission : A garment worn by a man : A sonnet : A consonant. *Susie.*

197.—ENIGMA.

I am composed of 10 letters.
My 10, 6, 8 is to shovel.
My 2, 3, 4, 5 is to spoil.
My 1, 6, 7 is a metal.
My 7, 9 is opposite of yes. *Clara Churchill.*

WINTER EVENING AMUSEMENT.

"INVISIBLE CATS."

We have heard of a game called "Invisible Cats." In this those who take part in it should keep their unmuaical voices low, or the play-room might be filled with caterwauling. Let one player sit blindfolded in the middle of the room. The others pass, one by one, round him at a little distance. As each passes in front of the chair, the blindfolded player calls, coaxingly, "Puss, pussy, come along!" and the "cat" passing must stand still, and give one "mew," If the voice can be guessed the name is called, and the "cat" that is detected takes the blindfold position sitting in the chair. Pussy's voice can be imitated in countless tones : one of the best, the well-known squeak of a kitten, is made, not in the mouth, but far back in the throat, without any movement of the tongue, but with a slight parting of the lips.

CONUNDRUM.

What is that which never was seen, felt, nor heard, and yet has a name? Nothing.

186.—ENIGMA.

Serve the Lord with fear.

187.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

H
C A T
H A R R Y
T R Y
Y

188.—ENIGMA.

A faithful witness will not lie.

189.—DROP LETTER PUZZLE.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

190.—ENIGMA.

Never brag of your fish before you catch him.

191.—ANAGRAM.

The things which are impossible with man are possible with God.

192.—DROP LETTER PUZZLE.

We ought to read the holy Bible.

OUR HARVESTERS.

Lucy Benton, 3 ; Mamie Strong, 3 ; Lewis Christie, 4 ; Edward D. Johnson, 2.

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